

AMENDMENT

Kindly amend the application, without prejudice, as follows:

IN THE CLAIMS:

Kindly amend claims 1-4, without prejudice, to read as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A promoter-transactivator system for inducible high-level mammalian gene expression with the option of cell growth control comprising

(a) a promoter construct (IRFE promoter) having the general structure:

→ mRNA
[MPSV-E]-[IRF-1-binding sites]-[CMV]—DNA,

wherein

MPSV-E means MPSV enhancer repeats of the sequence:

GCTAGCTTAAGTAACGCCATTTTGCAAGGCATGGGAAAAATACATAACTGAGAATAGAGAAG
TTCAGATCAAGGTCAGGAACAGAGAAACAGGAGAATATGGGCCAAACAGGATATCTGTGGTA
AGCAGTTCCTGCCCCGCTCAGGGCCAAGAACAGTTGGAACAGGAGAATTGGGCCAAACAGGA
TATCTGTGGTAAGCAGTTCCTGCCCCGCCTCAGGGCCAAGAACAGATGGTCCCCAGATGCGGT
CCCGCCCTCAGCAGTTTCTAGA, (SEQ ID NO: 1)

or isofunctional variants thereof obtained by substitution, insertion or deletion of one or more nucleotides,

IRF-1-binding sites means the sequence:

GATCCCTTCTCGGGAAATGGAAACTGAAAATCAGATCCCTTCTCGGGAAATGGAAACTGAAA
ATCAGATC, (SEQ ID NO: 2)

or isofunctional variants thereof obtained by substitution, insertion or deletion of one or more nucleotides, and

CMV means a minimal promoter of the sequence:

TGGCGTGTACGGTGGGAGGCCTATATAAGCAGAGCTCGTTTAGTGAACCGTCAAACCGTCAA
ACCGCGGAAGCT, (SEQ ID NO: 3)

or isofunctional variants thereof obtained by substitution, insertion or deletion of one or more nucleotides,

and

(b) a transactivator construct coding for a fusion protein comprising IRF-1 and an estrogen receptor.

2. (Previously presented) An expression vector comprising the promoter construct and the transactivator construct of claim 1.

3. (Previously presented) A mammalian cell transfected or transformed with the expression vector of claim 2.

4. (Previously presented) A process for inducible high-level mammalian gene expression with the option of cell growth control comprising the steps of:

(a) transfecting or transforming mammalian cells with the expression vector of claim 2;

(b) culturing said mammalian cells in a suitable medium; and,

(c) optionally, controlling the growth of said mammalian cells by varying the concentration and the duration of exposure to estradiol in the medium.

5. (Previously presented) The promoter-transactivator system of claim 1, wherein the promoter construct and the transactivator construct are incorporated in a single expression vector.

6. (Previously presented) The promoter-transactivator system of claim 1, wherein the promoter construct and the transactivator construct are incorporated in separate expression vectors.

7. (Previously presented) An expression vector comprising the promoter construct of claim 1.

8. (Previously presented) An expression vector comprising the transactivator construct of claim 1.

9. (Previously presented) A mammalian cell transfected or transformed with the expression vector of claim 2.

10. (Previously presented) A mammalian cell transfected or transformed with the expression vector of claims 5.

11. (Previously presented) A mammalian cell transfected or transformed with the expression vector of claim 6.

12. (Previously presented) A process for inducible high-level mammalian gene expression with the option of cell growth control comprising the steps of:

- (a) transfecting or transforming mammalian cells with the expression vector of claim 7;
- (b) culturing said mammalian cells in a suitable medium; and,
- (c) optionally, controlling the growth of said mammalian cells by varying the concentration and the duration of exposure to estradiol in the medium.

13. (Previously presented) A process for inducible high-level mammalian gene expression with the option of cell growth control comprising the steps of:

- (a) transfecting or transforming mammalian cells with the expression vector of claim 8;
- (b) culturing said mammalian cells in a suitable medium; and,

(c) optionally, controlling the growth of said mammalian cells by varying the concentration and the duration of exposure to estradiol in the medium.